

## Area pipelines will be subject to tighter regulations

By Linda Steip  
Miner Staff Writer

The seven interstate natural gas pipelines that go through Kingman will be subject to more stringent regulations in the future, according to the Arizona Corporation Commission.

Five ACC commissioners, a U. S. Department of Transportation Office of Public Safety representative and the director of the Tucson division of El Paso Natural Gas spoke about pipeline safety issues at a public forum Thursday at Mohave Commu-

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nity College.

Kingman is one of five Arizona cities located near natural gas or liquid fuel pipelines visited this month in an effort to allay public concerns about pipeline safety.

The forums come on the heels of the July 30 rupture of a Kinder Morgan pipeline

carrying premium unleaded gasoline from Tucson to Phoenix. Approximately 16,500 gallons of gasoline spewed onto homes in a new housing development that fortunately was not yet occupied, said Kristin Mayes, an ACC Commissioner who attended the forum.

Four El Paso Natural Gas, one Questar and two Transwestern interstate natural gas pipelines go through Kingman along Interstate 40.

Homeland security since the Sept. 11  
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# Pipelines

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terrorist attacks discourages the dissemination of information as to the exact location of the pipelines, although the information can be obtained through proper channels such as the Arizona Department of Transportation.

Community emergency services agencies also have access to the information.

El Paso Natural Gas, Tucson Division Director Phillip Baca said the first El Paso natural gas pipeline was placed through Kingman in 1951, with three subsequent underground pipelines installed since.

The pipelines are buried three feet or less deep and are 36 inches in diameter.

ACC Public Information Officer Heather Murphy said because of the "aging infrastructure" of interstate pipelines in the state, the ACC will stay on top of pipeline safety issues.

The ACC, the state regulatory agency for pipeline safety, is trying to gain more authority in following up on pipeline safety violations. More control at the state level would allow more time for pipeline safety inspections, Mayes said.

The ACC has 12 inspectors for 680 miles of gasoline, natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines within the state.

In years past the ACC spent from two to six weeks each year auditing an interstate pipeline operator with



Robert Hippe, of the Arizona Corporation Commission Office of Pipeline Safety, impresses an electrical current to a pipe to demonstrate one method of checking pipeline safety at a forum Thursday. Seven interstate natural gas pipelines go through Kingman.

Miner Photo  
LINDA STELF

two state inspectors.

Since 1999 the ACC may spend up to two weeks auditing the same company every other year with only one state inspector.

"We have to work with the federal agency (U.S. DOT Office of Pipeline Safety) because they have the authority," Mayes said. "The ACC has agent status, but we want more control."

Mayes said the ACC also wants more enforcement status to follow up when state violations are found.

One violation case handled by the federal agency took 10 years to close out, she said.

A change in investigation procedures is also needed, Mayes said. All evidence should be sent to an independent lab first, not sent back to the company that committed the violation, as is done now.

Gas leaks and explosions are rare, but have occurred. Corrosion of pipelines and damage incurred during excavation are the biggest threats to underground pipelines.